

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 5-18 are pending. By this amendment, claims 2-4, 6 and 8 are canceled, and claims 1, 5, 7, 9, 10, 14 and 15 are amended.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-18 under 35 USC 102(e) over Iwatani (US Pat. 6,629,512). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Iwatani discloses a hybrid system, and that a motor is used as a power source to perform running control of a vehicle until the preheating of the engine is completed (col. 37, lines 1-10). Iwatani also discloses that the switching operation from the "LOCK" position of the ignition switch to the "ON" position is used as a trigger for starting execute preheat (col. 14, lines 41-48). However, Iwatani does not disclose or suggest that the intention determination element determines that the driver intends to start driving the vehicle when at least one of the following is fulfilled: (i) a condition that a shift lever is shifted to a position enabling the vehicle to be driven, (ii) a condition that an accelerator pedal is depressed, and (iii) a condition that a vehicle speed has exceeded a predetermined speed as recited in claims 1 and 14. Iwatani also does not disclose the corresponding recitations in claim 15 of the present application.

For the above reasons, none of the pending claims are anticipated by Iwatani. Withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

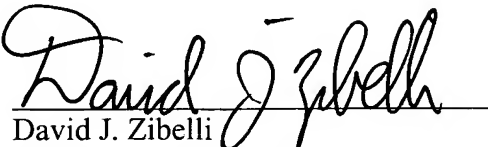
In view of the above, Applicant's submit that the application is in condition for allowance. Prompt consideration and allowance are solicited.

The Examiner is invited to call the undersigned at (202) 220-4200 to discuss any information concerning this application.

The Office is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or § 1.17 or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 11-0600.

Respectfully submitted,

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